



Michigan Department of Transportation

Public Hearing

US-12 Improvement Study

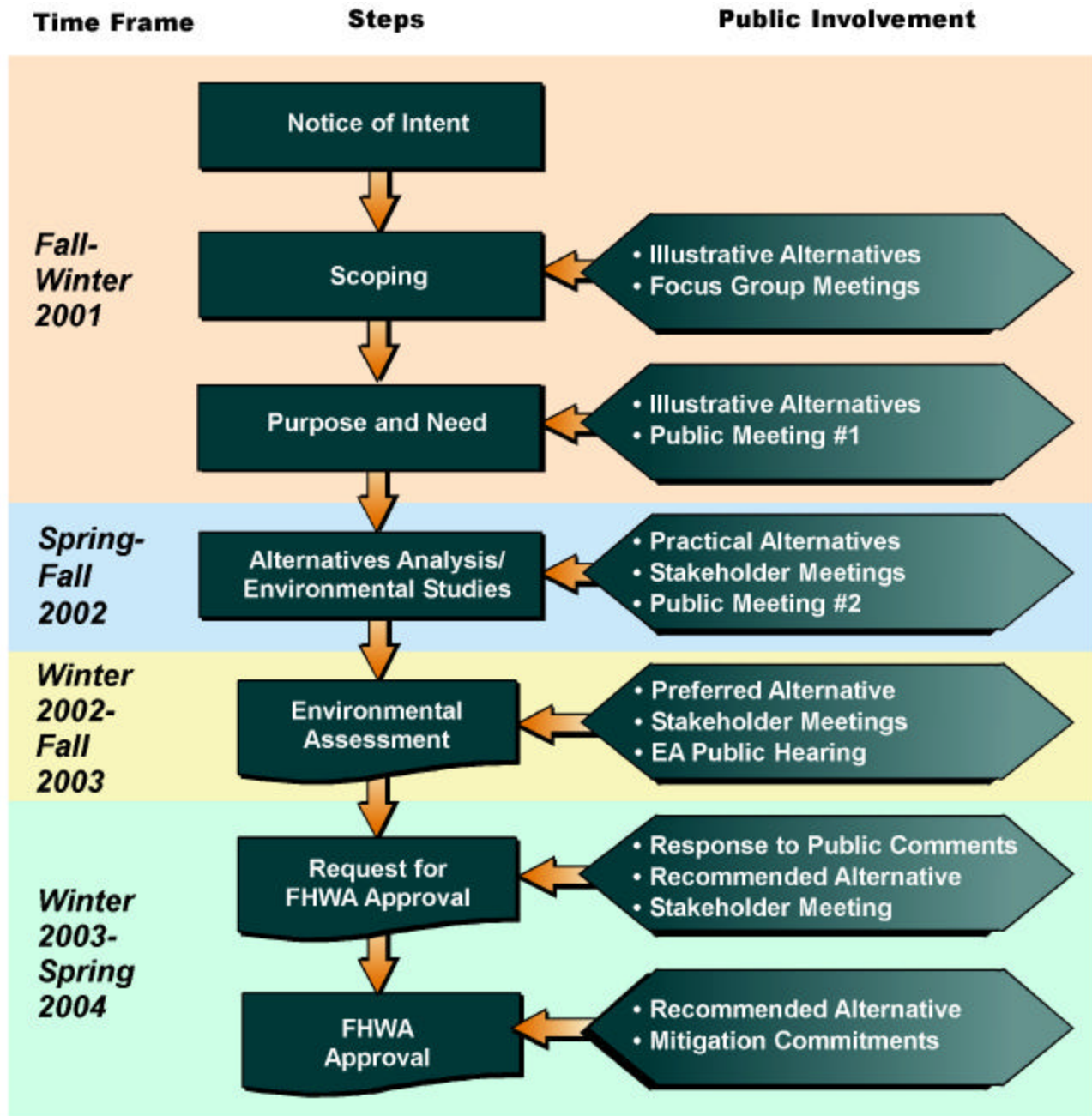
From the City of Saline to Munger Road (west of I-94)

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Pittsfield Township Office, Morris Hall, 6201 West Michigan Avenue

3:30 - 7:30 pm

This time frame was developed for the convenience of the public. Feel free to attend anytime during scheduled hours. The location of this open house type public meeting is accessible to individuals with mobility impairments. The parking lot has reserved parking spaces and has ramps to the meeting rooms. With an advance notice of seven days, MDOT can make most of the materials for this hearing available in alternative formats, such as large print or audiotape, and can make accommodations for sign interpretation and/or assisted living devices. Please call (517) 373-9534 or (517) 373-2090 (TDD) to request accommodations.



US-12 Improvement Study

Note: Website and Toll-free Telephone Information Line Active throughout Study

(Revised October 27, 2003)

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY ACT (NEPA) PROCESS**

Introduction

This brochure summarizes the findings of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the improvement of 6.5 miles of US-12 from the City of Saline to Munger Road in Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan as shown on the study area graphic (Figure 1.1).

The EA was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, which requires that the social, economic, and natural environmental impacts of any proposed action of the federal government be analyzed for decision-making and public information purposes. Additionally, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act requires that an evaluation be prepared when the proposed action may have an adverse effect on a property eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or may impact publicly owned park lands, recreation areas, or a wildlife/waterfowl refuge of national, state or local significance. This evaluation must determine that there is no prudent and feasible alternative that avoids the 4(f) impact and that all possible measures to minimize harm have been taken before the project may proceed. The proposed project will impact the Pittsfield Preserve, which is roughly bounded by US-12 on the south, Platt Road to the east, the Ann Arbor Railroad corridor to the west, and Morgan Road to the north. Six properties are eligible for NRHP designation and four of the six will be affected.

Public involvement is essential to the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) decision-making process. Throughout the 24-month US-12 Improvement Study, MDOT has engaged in dialogue with the public, local officials, and state and federal agencies to help shape the proposed improvements. MDOT is sharing the published results of the EA / Section 4(f) Evaluation with the public.

To continue the public involvement process, MDOT has scheduled a public hearing to discuss this study. The public hearing will take place on **Wednesday, November 19, 2003**, in Morris Hall at the Pittsfield Township Office located at 6201 West Michigan Avenue. For the convenience of local residents, MDOT will conduct the hearing using an "open forum" format. The back cover of this brochure details the specifics on the public hearing format.

MDOT solicits comments on the Environmental Assessment / Section 4(f) Evaluation through the public hearing. A court reporter will be available to take statements at the hearing and written comments will also be received. These comments, along with the environmental document, help MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) decide what improvements best serve the area's needs.

Figure 1.0 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process



As shown in the Figure 1.0 above, throughout the NEPA process the number of alternatives is refined as the level of analysis increases until ultimately a Recommended Alternative is identified. Currently MDOT is in the Preferred Alternative stage of the US-12 Improvement Study.

Figure 1.1 Study Area



Need For Improvement

The need for improving this section of US-12 is based upon four elements: (1) system continuity; (2) roadway capacity and increased travel demand; (3) roadway safety; and (4) accommodating study area growth.

Capacity - US-12 currently carries large volumes of traffic. At the western end of the study area, the Visteon plant (formerly the Ford Motor Company facility) and other industries are major traffic generators. US-12 also links many residential developments in the study area. Moreover, planned subdivisions along the corridor are developing rapidly. As a result, the US-12 corridor currently carries between 22,000 and 32,000 vehicles per day over much of its length. In the past two decades, traffic on US-12 has increased about 46 percent overall, and up to 70 percent at some intersections in the study area. Future US-12 traffic volumes for year 2025 range between 34,000 and 52,000 vehicles per day (more than a 47 percent increase over current traffic volumes).

Roadway Safety - MDOT conducted a three-year (1996-1999) safety review and crash analysis on US-12 between Industrial Park Drive and Munger Road. Study results showed that crash rates in the study area exceed the statewide and MDOT region rates for similar roadways. All roadway improvements will increase safety for motorists using US-12. National studies have shown that implementing a multi-lane roadway reduces crash rates by 19 to 35 percent.

System Continuity - US-12, from Saline to Munger Road, runs in a northeast/southwest direction, providing a direct link between the cities of Saline and Ypsilanti. US-12 intersects with State/Moon Roads, Platt Road, and Carpenter Road, and an interchange provides access to US-23. All of these roadways are major north-south routes providing access to Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Improvements to US-12 are necessary in order to enhance the roadway's function in relation to other major roadways that serve this area. The study area contains the only two-lane segment of US-12 between Saline and Detroit. Beyond the study area to the east and west, US-12 becomes a five-lane roadway.

Growth and Economic Development - Pittsfield Township has experienced and continues to experience extensive residential, industrial and commercial development. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) projects a 97 percent increase in Township population between 2000 and 2025. Employment in the study area is also expected to increase significantly (50 percent during the same time period), due to existing and planned industrial and commercial projects in the Township. Housing projections closely parallel the population growth. Improvements to US-12 are needed to accommodate this growth and economic development within south central Washtenaw County.

Alternatives Considered

During the US-12 Improvement Study, more than 16 major improvement alternatives were proposed and evaluated. During the evaluation, the relative merits of each alternative were assessed according to specific criteria to determine which alternatives best met the study's purpose and need. The improvement alternatives included several roadway alignments, four cross-section options, four US-12/US-23 interchange options, and transit/transportation demand management (TDM) and transportation systems management (TSM) strategies. The alternatives were reduced to two Practical Alternatives (1 and 1-N) and presented at a public meeting in November 2002.

Since November 2002, Practical Alternatives 1 and 1-N were evaluated in the context of selecting a Preferred Alternative by comparing their respective impacts to traffic, engineering, land use (residences/businesses, right-of-way), wetlands, woodlands, streams, historic properties, recreational properties, and other socioeconomic and environmental resources. Further input from the public, local stakeholders, government officials, and state resource agencies, has been used to guide the selection and design of the Preferred Alternative. A modified version of Practical Alternative 1 was chosen as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative provides a more balanced solution to the area's identified transportation needs and meets the study's purpose and need better than both Practical Alternative 1 and 1-N.

Preferred Alternative – The Preferred Alternative generally follows existing US-12 with a slight deviation north of the current roadbed to straighten the curve just east of Campbell Road. A combination of a five-lane urban arterial and four-lane urban boulevard was selected as the preferred roadway cross-section. The boulevard segment of the roadway extends 1.4 miles and begins approximately 0.6 miles west of the State/Moon Roads intersection and ends approximately 0.8 miles east of the State/Moon Roads intersection. Improvements to the US-12/US-23 interchange consist of modifications to the existing rural-diamond interchange. The entrance to southbound US-23 would be moved to align with the existing southbound exit and the entrance to northbound US-23 would be moved to align with the northbound US-23 exit. The flow of traffic through the interchange would be improved by reducing the number of signals from three to two. In all, more than 16 alternatives were considered throughout the US-12 Improvement Study, which began in 2001.

No-Build Alternative – A No-Build Alternative was also considered during the study. Under the No-Build, there would be no major change in the existing US-12 roadway. Typical low-cost, low impact improvements, including roadway resurfacing, would be accomplished as needed.

Impacts

The following discussion summarizes the potential beneficial and adverse effects of impacts to the human and natural environments associated with the proposed Preferred Alternative. A comparison of the impacts between the Preferred Alternative and Practical Alternatives is provided in Table 1.0.

Physical Environment

Surface Water Quality. There are three stream crossings located within the study area, all designated as Washtenaw County Drains. Because the three drains already exhibit degraded water quality due to excessive nutrient loading, construction of the Preferred Alternative will have minimal impact on the existing surface water quality of these streams.

Hydrology and Floodplains. Long-term impacts to stream hydrology are associated with an increase in paved area resulting in increased runoff. The loss of wetlands, which function as natural storm water detention areas, also impact stream hydrology by reducing flood storage capacity. These impacts are expected to be minor because the new roadway largely uses the existing roadbed. In addition, the large wetlands associated with Hertler-Nissley and Pittsfield No. 5 Drain on the west end of the study area will buffer these effects.

Groundwater Resources. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will not have an adverse impact to groundwater resources, assuming appropriate methods for locating and securing septic and sewer systems are implemented prior to construction activities.

Ecological Environment

Vegetation & Wildlife. Because a majority of the study area has been altered by past human use, direct effects to terrestrial resources resulting from the Preferred Alternative will be minor. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will result in the loss of 0.7 acres of woodland.

Wetland Resources. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will require filling 4.4 acres of wetland habitat to accommodate road widening and grading. This includes taking some small wetlands in their entirety as well as placing fill along the edges of larger wetland complexes where the proposed roadway improvement unavoidably crosses these features.

Threatened and Endangered Species. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will require clearing of 0.7 acres of a woodlot to accommodate road construction. This will not directly affect the area within this woodlot identified as highly suitable Indiana bat habitat. The primary effect of proposed activities will be a loss of some buffer area surrounding identified Indiana bat habitat.

Social and Economic Environment

Relocations and Right-of-Way Impacts. The Preferred Alternative will require 77.2 acres of right-of-way acquisition. There will be 10 residential displacements due to the wider right-of-way required for the Preferred Alternative. While the Preferred Alternative will displace some residential units, it is likely to generally improve mobility, safety, and access to residential developments as a result of the expected increased capacity and turning-lane and intersection improvements.

Relocation assistance and services will be provided by MDOT in accordance and compliance with Act 31, Michigan P.A. 1970; Act 227, Michigan P.A. 1972; and the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) as amended, and Act 87, Michigan P.A. 1980 as amended.

Commercial/Industrial. The Preferred Alternative will displace two existing commercial structures and may result in the loss of some jobs and potential revenue to the Township. There will be some loss of land for business expansion to right-of-way acquisition; however, traffic access and mobility will improve, supporting commercial and industrial expansion near the corridor.

Noise. Studies measured noise levels for existing conditions and estimated 2025 noise levels for the No-Build Alternative and the Preferred Alternative. For existing conditions along US-12, the threshold noise criterion was approached or exceeded at 20 of 126 sites along the corridor. Compared to existing conditions, the 2025 No-Build Alternative will exceed the threshold noise criterion at 22 sites and the 2025 Preferred Alternative at 25 sites.

Noise mitigation has been thoroughly considered. At all of the identified locations, except the Hickory Pointe subdivision in the project area, a noise barrier could not be provided at a cost below the noise abatement criteria. Also, to be effective the noise barrier would need to be continuous and have no breaks or openings in the barrier for street or road access. Since breaks would be needed for access and the cost per benefiting receiver was not achieved, it was determined that barriers would not be effective and are not recommended. For the Hickory Pointe subdivision, if the Preferred Alternative becomes the Recommended Alternative, MDOT will conduct additional barrier analysis and coordinate with the residents of the Hickory Pointe subdivision and Pittsfield Township regarding the feasibility of noise barrier construction.

However, due to the importance of the concern for Pittsfield Township residents, other noise mitigation measures are still being considered for this project. These abatement measures include quieter pavement types, creating buffers or berms and planting vegetation.

Land Use

Non-motorized Transportation Modes. Because there are no sidewalks (except for new or proposed development), or no bike lanes along US-12 in the study area, no direct effects are expected to occur to existing non-motorized transportation activities for the Preferred Alternative. However, the right-of-way planned for the Preferred Alternative will accommodate a ten foot-wide area beyond the curb for a future sidewalk/non-motorized network along the US-12 corridor.

Institutional/Municipal. The Preferred Alternative will better facilitate critical response times for fire and police and will more safely serve the increased traffic generated by the new Saline Area School campus and the Washtenaw Christian Academy by providing for more efficient traffic flow between these institutions along US-12. Under the No-Build Alternative, traffic congestion may increase, which may result in longer response times for police and fire departments.

Open Space, Public Parks, and Recreational Areas. Construction of the Preferred Alternative will require acquisition of 3.8 acres along approximately 1,100 feet of the Pittsfield Preserve where it abuts the existing US-12 roadway.

Environmental Justice

The Preferred Alternative will not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations within the study area.

Cultural Resources

Four historic properties will be affected. Three historic properties would be potentially relocated, and one property requires right-of-way property acquisition. Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is ongoing to confirm adverse impacts and measures to minimize harm to these historic resources.

Table 1.0 COMPARISON OF IMPACTS
Preferred Alternative and Practical Alternatives 1 and 1-N

Alternatives		Displacements		New ROW Required* (acres)	Wetlands Affected* (acres)	Woodlands Affected ** (acres)	Stream Crossings	Historic Properties Affected***	Recreational Properties Affected (acres)****
		Residences	Businesses						
Preferred Alt.	Combination Five-Lane Arterial and Four Lane Boulevard	10	2	77.2	4.4	0.7	3	4	3.8
Practical Alt. I	Five-Lane Urban	7	1	66.7	4.1	0.5	3	3	1.4
	Four-Lane Blvd.	14	4	79.7	4.7	1.1	3	3	1.3
Practical Alt. I-N	Five-Lane Urban	9	2	84.7	5.3	6	3	3	16
	Four-Lane Blvd.	15	3	104.7	6.1	9	3	3	20

* Includes Improvements to the US-12/US-23 Interchange and additional right-of-way for stormwater detention.

** Woodlands north/south of Textile Road contain potential Indiana Bat habitat.

*** Effects on historic properties would include taking additional land for road right-of-way.

**** Recreational property is the Pittsfield Preserve.

Note: The Preferred Alternative was developed as a refinement of Practical Alternative 1 and includes a combination five-lane arterial and four-lane boulevard roadway cross-section. The higher residential and commercial displacements and increased ROW impacts (when compared to Practical Alternative 1 five-lane) associated with the Preferred Alternative are primarily the result of adding the boulevard section between Rolling Hills subdivision and the Ann Arbor Railroad. This cross-section was chosen for the Preferred Alternative for the increased efficiency, mobility, vehicular safety, and pedestrian and non-motorized safety benefits this option provided for the US-12 - State/Moon/Old State/ and Fosdick intersections.

US-12 Improvement Study

Public Hearing Comments

Please use this sheet to express your ideas and/or concerns regarding this study and the Environmental Assessment. This sheet may be folded and mailed to the address printed on the backside of this page. Each comment will be shared with all the members of the study team for their consideration and will be summarized in the official transcript of the public hearing.

Comments should be postmarked or electronically dated on or before December 20, 2003.

(If additional space is necessary, please attach a separate sheet of paper)

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal black lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Please deposit your comments in the box at the public hearing meeting site or mail, fax, e-mail comments to:

Mr. Bob Parsons, Public Hearings Officer
Michigan Department of Transportation
425 West Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
FAX: (517) 373-9255
E-mail: parsonsb@michigan.gov

Please Place
Stamp Here

**Bob Parsons, Public Hearings Officer
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909**

If Mailing Please Fold and Tape Here (Do Not Staple)

US-12 Improvement Study: What's Next?

After the public hearing, a copy of the complete transcript of all written and oral comments received in response to the findings of the EA will be available for public review by January 2004 at the same locations as listed for EA review. Each comment will be shared with all the study team members and with MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) management for their consideration. After reviewing all comments MDOT will select a Recommended Alternative. Following the selection of the Recommended Alternative, MDOT will request the Federal Highway Administration issue a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to close the environmental clearance process.

No funding for design, right-of-way acquisition or construction phases of this project has been identified in MDOT's five-year Road and Bridge Program.

US-12 Improvement Study

PUBLIC HEARING FORMAT

This public hearing is your opportunity to voice your opinion regarding the proposed US-12 improvements from the City of Saline to Munger Road (west of I-94) in Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan. The public hearing for this project will be conducted using an "open forum" style. This informal type of hearing allows the public to stop in at anytime during the scheduled hours, gather facts on the study and talk one-to-one with MDOT staff regarding engineering, environmental compliance and real estate acquisition.

A court reporter will be available to record any oral statements. Hearing participants interested in making a statement or comment about the proposed project may do so at anytime during the hearing. Comments will appear in the official hearing transcript. Citizens can also fill out the comment form in this brochure and deposit it into the comments box at the hearing site. Comments can also be mailed, faxed or E-mailed to the address on this page. The deadline for comments is **December 20, 2003**. We urge you to take advantage of one of these methods to let MDOT know your views on the proposed project.

A copy of the complete transcript of all written and oral comments received in response to the findings of the Environmental Assessment (EA) will be available for public review in **January 2004** at the same locations as listed for EA review.

Each comment will be shared with all the study team members and with MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) management for their consideration. Please mail, fax or E-mail comments to:

Bob Parsons, Public Hearings Officer
Michigan Department of Transportation
425 West Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909
FAX: (517) 373-9255
E-mail: parsonsb@michigan.gov

